

CARVEN



JEAN PAUL GAULTIER



A LESSON IN LUXURY: IFTF & THE REAL FUR STORY

Fur's dominance on spring and fall runways all over the world has firmly established fur as a must-have for fashion leaders worldwide, sources attest. And as the popularity of fur continues to grow it becomes more important than ever to reassure consumers, retailers and designers that the fur trade is a responsible, well regulated industry that supports the highest animal welfare standards. At the forefront of this movement to provide transparency about the provenance of furs sold today is the International Fur Trade Federation (IFTF).

"Fur has a very long and proud heritage that has been handed down through the generations in all cultures," said Andy Lenhart, Chairman of IFTF. "We welcome the opportunity to further understanding about the trade whenever we can."

IFTF has recently collaborated with the four major fur auction houses, American Legend Cooperative, Finnish Fur Sales, Copenhagen Fur and North American Fur Auctions, to introduce a new fur labeling program, the Origin Assured (OA™) label. This groundbreaking new program supports IFTF's ongoing commitment to



transparency through the fur industry's supply chain. IFTF has recognized that today's consumer expects to be provided with honest, clear information on where their fur comes from as well as reassurance that it is produced in a responsible manner. The OA™ label assures consumers that the fur or fur product they are buying comes from a country where national or local regulations or standards governing fur production are in force, IFTF said.

The initial phase of this program began with the identification and annotation of OA™ qualified fur pelts during the December, 2006 auctions. The associated OA™ hangtags were then made available to buyers of OA™ goods. Allowing for product to move through processing and manufacturing the first fur products carrying the OA™ label will be in stores beginning this fall-winter retail season. An OA™ label assures the product is 100 percent OA™.

IFTF is committed to the responsible and humane treatment of animals involved in the fur trade. The international fur industry does not trade in endangered species and all fur types used by the industry come from spe-

cies that are sustainable and abundant. The IFTF and its members support regulations of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and strives to help designers and consumers choose fur based on facts and not pressure from animal rights groups.

"Everyone is entitled to their opinion," Lenhart said. "We support the consumer's ability to form an opinion based on fact. You should not deny the consumer's right to choose. (Animal rights groups) seek to deny consumers this choice and we think that's wrong."

Many sources in the fashion industry are appreciative of IFTF's efforts to educate designers and consumers about the use of fur. "It is important to produce the product under a well-regulated industry, where animal welfare is priority," said designer Robert Hall, who works with Cacharel in Paris. "People should be allowed the choice to wear it through rational decision."

Renowned couturier Jean Paul Gaultier said he is "always proposing it [fur]. There has always been fur. It's not a return but a continuation of fur. Fur is a material that has not been replaced."

Julien Macdonald, the celebrated UK designer who has worked for Chanel and Givenchy and now designs his own highly successful eponymous label, is a staunch fur advocate. Macdonald began working with fur under the direction of Karl Lagerfeld at Chanel, and said both he and Lagerfeld enjoy working with fur. "Karl is a big fan of fur and always used to ask me to incorporate it when I was the knitwear designer for Chanel. I started by knitting fur and combining it with cashmere and wools."

When Macdonald launched his own line, his love of fur carried over. "It's a serious part of my business; I use a lot of different furs. Chinchilla is my favorite because it's soft, luxurious, rare and super expensive. Fur adds a certain glamour and exclusivity to a collection."

Macdonald acknowledged that he is questioned about his use of fur, however, he feels comfortable defending it.

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Jean Paul Gaultier

Pascal Millet, artistic director of Carven, enjoys working with mink and sable in particular, as well as long-hair furs that are more casual. "Fur is a very nice material to use because of the texture and all the new techniques to make it more unique and different than before. Most of the time, I like to use fur in natural colors, but sometimes it's fun to dye it in bright tones, especially for evening gowns."

For Robert Hall, the meticulous craftsmanship required for certain fur techniques fascinates him. "(These techniques) when combined with a product of such diverse finishings in color, print, hair length, leather treatment and possible fabric combinations, distinguishes fur from anything else. The real product, its tactile and sensuous qualities, its sheer luxury, just cannot be replicated."

And consumers are recognizing the cache that a fur garment brings as they seek out fur fashions to add a touch of luxury to their wardrobe. Cary Fetman, Hollywood stylist to the stars, looks to fur repeatedly to give his clients a distinctive, dramatic, elegant look.

"Fur instantly reads glamour and success and polishes off a great outfit by adding a dimension of luxury and eye-popping drama," he said. "Today it is a must-have for true fashionistas. The richness and depth and the 'it' factor makes any look pop like that fabulous piece of jewelry that makes you say 'wow!'"

Consumers are also drawn to the luxurious qualities of fur. Beatrice Planinsek of Planinsek, a luxury retailer located in the prestigious shopping haven of Collins Street in Melbourne, Australia, feels that customers today are more aware of the pros and cons of fur, and therefore when they choose to buy, do so with a more informed view.

For Planinsek, "Fur has been an integral part of history for many reasons. It is important to showcase the continually-evolving style and creativity of fur, and offer customers the choice of wearing it or not." ▽

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

INTERNATIONAL FUR TRADE FEDERATION

www.iftf.com
www.fur-style.com
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